Comparison: Old vs. New Connecticut School Climate Policy

Public Act 23-167:

Category	Old Policy	New Policy (Public Act 23-167)
Restorative Practices	Focused primarily on punitive discipline measures for behavior issues.	Focuses on **restorative practices** to build relationships, repair harm, and reintegrate students.
School Climate Improvement Plan	No mandated, data-driven climate improvement plan required.	Requires each school to create a **data-driven, building-specific plan** based on climate surveys.
Bullying and Cyberbullying	Bullying was addressed but lacked a clear, updated focus on cyberbullying and other specific forms of aggression. Bullying defined as conduct that is “severe, persistent or pervasive,”	Expanded definitions include **cyberbullying** and **teen dating violence**. Must use a **restorative approach** in response to incidents. Bullying is defined as “unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.
Training Requirements	Limited staff training on behavior intervention and school climate.	Mandated **annual staff training** on **restorative practices**, **social-emotional learning**, and **behavior interventions** starting in 2024.
School Climate Surveys	No structured process for regular school climate assessments.	Requires **biennial climate surveys** to students, staff, and families to inform improvement plans.
Mental Health Resources	Basic guidelines for student mental health services.	Requires schools to establish and enhance mental health support systems, integrating services into the school climate strategy to address students' emotional and psychological needs.
Accountability & Data Collection	Less emphasis on data-driven accountability and continuous improvement.	**Ongoing data collection** on discipline records, school climate metrics, and survey results to track improvement.
Challenging Behavior Reporting	Focused on incident-based disciplinary actions with limited follow-up.	Introduces a clear protocol for reporting, assessing, and responding to **challenging behaviors** using restorative practices.

Key Takeaways:

- The **new policy** emphasizes **restorative practices**, data-driven climate improvements, and regular staff training.
- Schools are required to adopt a **comprehensive plan** for addressing school climate, bullying, and behavior issues with a focus on inclusivity and positive relationships.
- **Accountability** has been strengthened,

This side-by-side comparison highlights the shift from a punitive, discipline-focused approach to a **restorative, inclusive, and data-driven** school climate framework.